

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
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# News Release



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### **ARTHUR R. MARSHALL LOXAHATCHEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

#### **Refuge Starts Drought and Alligator Interaction Boater Campaign**

On Friday, July 2, 2004 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service started a boater safety campaign in regards to the current drought conditions, stated Refuge Manager Mark Musaus. Because the interior of the refuge is becoming drier and canal levels are low, refuge alligators, wading birds, and other wildlife are concentrated in the available water along the L-40 rim canal. Refuge officials are concerned about visitor safety and disturbance of already stressed wildlife. Boaters running at high speeds may hit or kill alligators and also damage their boat's propeller. Boating activities in already low canals may also flush wading birds and other wildlife away from the now scarce feeding and suitable resting areas. This safety campaign is geared towards making the boating public more aware when using the refuge canals. Officials would suggest slower boat speeds and noticing alligators or other wildlife in the canals. This will protect refuge wildlife resources from being subject to unacceptable loss or stress.

The refuge is located off US 441/SR 7, two miles south of SR 804 (Boynton Beach Blvd) and three miles north of SR 806 (Delray Beach's Atlantic Ave). The refuge is currently open from 6:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., seven days a week. Refuge hours change seasonally and are posted at each entrance. The Visitor Center hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. from Wednesday through Friday and from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekends and holidays. The Visitor Center is closed on Christmas Day. An entrance fee of \$5.00 per vehicle or \$1.00 per pedestrian is charged. A variety of annual passes, including a \$12.00 refuge specific annual pass, are available.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 100 million – acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of over 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands, and other special management areas. It also operates 66 national fish hatcheries, 64 fish and wildlife management offices, and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state and fish and wildlife agencies. For more information visit our website at <http://www.fws.gov>.